

**PRACTICAL NOTES ON NURSING PROCEDURES.** By Jessie D. Britten, S.R.N.  
(Pp. viii + 199; figs. 135. 15s.) Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone, 1960.

ON reading through a book—any book—on nursing ‘procedures’ I am reminded of the man who said that he ‘did not like to read a dictionary as he always lost the thread of the story in the wealth of detail.’ To say this is no disparagement of Miss Britten’s book, the third edition of which is no worse, and in many respects very much better than others of its kind.

The material is presented, as in previous editions, with clarity and precision, there is no waste of words, the diagrams are neat and well labelled, trays and trolleys are uncluttered and student nurses and others who use it should find no difficulty in identifying items. For these reasons it should continue to find favour with students and trained staff alike. True, most hospital staffs have their own ‘native’ plan of ‘procedure,’ evolved either from years of experience or by taking from various sources what they consider to be best, but some may still prefer to use a textbook.

Most useful and necessary information concerning hospital is to be found in chapter 1, but I regret to see that the patient is still placed last on the nurse’s list of ‘Loyalties.’ In the past nurses were told that their first duty was to their patients. Was it too simple? Will some writer of textbooks please tell the student nurses that they, too, have a right to expect loyalty from all those to whom they are expected to give it.

Nurses may continue to raise their eyebrows at the perpetuation in modern books on nursing of what appear to them to be out-moded forms of treatment, for example, blistering, leeching, and cupping (the latter is still, I understand, widely practised in different regions of the world). Even Leiter’s coils are illustrated and may yet stage a ‘come-back.’ Nurses will not seek in vain for information on such up-to-date matters as radioactive substances, radium therapy, Geiger counters, and electric thermometers, in addition to such everyday items as fluid balance, preparations for laboratory tests, and infant bathing and feeding.

I like this book, even though I personally have never acquired a palate for this ‘dehydrated’ form of nursing; that is ‘procedures’ divorced from the ‘art.’ I dislike the word ‘procedure’ in relation to nursing, because it creates a tendency to make the tray or trolley the focal point of the nurse’s attention. Nevertheless, the book should prove useful both to the habitual seeker after knowledge and to the last-minute ‘swotter.’

One criticism which I would make is of the widespread use of receivers for sterile as well as for soiled articles. With the extension of a central sterilising service, however, the risk of possible confusion should be eliminated.

I hope that nurses will buy, or even borrow this book from the classroom library. There may be a few points upon which Miss Britten and other tutors may agree to differ, but that fact should present no difficulty to the right kind of people. G. C.

**FROM GIRLHOOD TO WOMANHOOD.** By Albert Sharman, M.D., D.Sc., F.R.C.O.G.  
(Pp. vii + 67; figs. 4. 6s.) Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone Ltd., 1960.

THIS short book, written for the non-medical reader by a well-known gynaecologist, is primarily designed to enlighten the teenage girl. The author gives a clear and concise account of the various physiological changes which occur in the female during adolescence. The information given will also be found invaluable by a mother anxious to prepare her daughter for the onset and hygiene of menstruation.

The latter part of the book, however, contains details of pregnancy, ante-natal care, labour, and infertility, in the opinion of the reviewer more suitable reading for the young married woman. Perhaps the author should have published two volumes.

Nevertheless, in these days of early maturity, this simple account of the physiology and pathology of reproduction may be profitably included in a teenager’s library. A. E. B.